

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ERIKA FORECASTED TO REACH USVI ON THURSDAY AS A STONG
TROPICAL STORM**

**PUBLIC URGED TO PREPARE, CLOSELY MONITOR TROPICAL STORM
ERIKA**

At 5 a.m., Tuesday, the center of Tropical Storm Erika was located near latitude 14.6 degrees North, longitude degrees 49.4 West, about 840 miles east of the Leeward Islands. Erika is moving toward the west near 20 miles per hour and a westward to west-northwestward motion with some decrease in forward speed is expected during the next couple of days.

A Tropical Storm Watch is in effect for Montserrat, Antigua, Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla, Saba and St. Eustatius. A Tropical Storm Watch means that tropical storm conditions are possible within the watch area, generally within 48 hours. Watches may be required for additional areas later today.

On the forecast track, the center of Erika will approach the Leeward Islands Wednesday night and early Thursday. Maximum sustained winds are near 45 miles per hour with higher gusts. Some strengthening is forecast during the next couple of days.

Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 80 miles from the center.

The next intermediate advisory is at 8 a.m. and the next complete advisory at 11 a.m.

USVI Forecast

On its current path and based on projections, the center of Erika should make its closest point of approach to the Virgin Islands on Thursday at 6 p.m. when the storm center will be located about 25 miles to the north-northeast of St. John. At that time, Erika is forecasted to be a strong tropical storm with sustained winds of up to 70 miles per hour, according to the National Weather Service – Weather Forecast Office at San Juan. Most models continue to indicate a significant amount of tropical moisture over the local area with a good potential for significant rainfall over the region.

VITEMA and the National Weather Service in advising the public to begin taking preparedness steps and to closely monitor the development of Tropical Storm Erika. Stay tuned to local radio and television for weather updates and for more information and instructions from local government officials.

For more information about hurricane preparedness visit www.VITEMA.gov/hurricanes, www.Ready.gov or www.Listo.gov, or call VITEMA at 340-773-2244, 340-774-2244 or 340-776-2244.

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